

# NORTH FORK RANCHERIA PROJECT PRESS



## MADERA Tribune

OPINION

LETTERS

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### **'Ads over gambling are condemned by supervisor'**

Last week citizens of Madera County began receiving a barrage of direct-mail political ads smearing candidates for the Madera County Board of Supervisors based on their positions toward the proposed North Fork Rancheria development project. In my view these ads are unnecessary, inappropriate, and extremely disappointing. Such one-sided, negative, single-issue attack ads play no constructive role in this election process and do not conform to the values and needs of our community.

As everyone knows, I support tribal gaming because it is the law of the land and benefits Indians and California communities alike. Indian gaming creates local jobs and assists in eliminating poverty. That is the experience in our county. That is the experience of local officials across the state and nation. Indian gaming is not the answer to all our local problems but the downsides to tribal gaming are small, manageable and greatly outweighed by the benefits.

In August 2005, the Madera County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously 5-0 in support of a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiated with the North Fork Rancheria. In August 2006, the supervisors put their formal support behind the project, approving the North Fork development project 4-1. This action satisfied an important criterion for the governor's compacting process by showing that the local jurisdiction in which the tribe's proposed gaming project is located (Madera County) supported the project.

The governor's office continues to negotiate a compact with the tribe, and the federal government is evaluating the tribe's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and land-into-trust application.

Attempts to put the proposed North Fork Rancheria at the center of the upcoming supervisor races is an attempt to stir up controversy, smear a legitimate Indian gaming project and pit tribe against tribe.

I feel sorry for the good, decent, caring candidates who have been unnecessarily hurt and misrepresented by these viscous ads. Proceeds from Indian gaming would be better spent on improving the lives of tribal citizens.

**Gary Gilbert,  
Madera County Supervisor, District 5**